



## Tips and Tricks for Group Leaders at Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge

- **Do** remind your students what it means to be a naturalist – being observant, quiet, curious, etc. This is a great way to get everyone focused and back on track!
- **Do** stay in front of the group. That way, everyone will have the same chance to see wildlife and share their discoveries.
- **Do** stop and sit down from time to time with your students. It's important to have quiet time in your group and work on your journal pages.
- **Do** ask questions to keep students engaged. (Ex. what do you see? What do you hear? Who might have made this hole? etc.) Even if you know the answer, allow them to make discoveries, even if they're "wrong."
- **Do** foster participation from all of your students.
  - If someone is reluctant, give them a "job" to do, or ask specific questions.
  - If one student is answering everything, encourage them to give others a chance.
  - If students are distracted or unfocused, bring them back into the task by asking a direct question, or encouraging them to explore a specific object.
- **Do** let the students figure out how to use the equipment - this is part of their learning process!
- **Do** encourage students to fill out their journal pages completely. Remember, they do *not* have to be perfect. (For example, you do not have to spell words for them...they can sound them out).
- **Don't** feel like you have to know all the answers. "I don't know" is acceptable, but "I don't know, but let's sketch it or make some notes and see if we can find out together when we get back" is even better! We encourage you to come back with unanswered questions!
- **Don't** be afraid to jump right in and explore, journal, and share discoveries with your group of students – everyone will enjoy themselves more if you're involved, and you can lead by example!

*"If a child is to keep alive his inborn sense of wonder...he needs the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with him the joy, excitement and mystery of the world we live in."*

- Rachel Carson



# Wildlife Scene Investigators

## Group Leader Guidelines

Help students **SLOW DOWN, LOOK CLOSELY, EXPLORE** and **QUESTION**.

### Here are Some Questions that Facilitate Thinking

#### IF YOU FIND.....

##### Tracks:

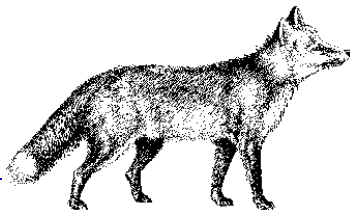
How many toes does can you count? Can you tell in which direction this animal was moving? Where do you think it was going? Can you tell if it was walking or running? How long and how wide is the track? What animal do you think left this track?

##### Tunnels in the snow:

Can you finds any clues to the animal that made this tunnel? Do you think it is being used? How can you tell if it is being used? Do any other tunnels connect to this one.? Has the animal marked the entrance (is there yellow snow or scat)? Are there tracks leading around the entrance? Are tracks leading in or out of the tunnel?

##### Scat, Fur, Feathers:

How did this sign get here? What do you think happened? Can you find any tracks of the animal that might have left this sign?



##### Signs of Feeding:

What animal might eat this? Can you find any scat the animal may have left after having a meal?



##### Nests

What animal might have built this?

What materials did it use? Is it being used now?



Remember...what you ***don't*** find  
can be a clue too!